DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 244 SO 002 933

AUTHOR	Baldridge, J. Victor
TITLE	Environmental Pressure, Professional Autonomy, and Coping Strategies in Academic Organizations.
INSTITUTION	Stanford Univ., Calif. Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	RD-Memo-78
BUREAU NO	BR-5-0252
PUB DATE	Sep 71
NOTE	26p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Freedom; College Environment; *College Faculty; *Colleges; Community Influence; Educational Sociology; Professors; School Community Relationship; Social Influences; *Universities
IDENTIFIERS	*Organization Theory; Professional Autonomy

ABSTRACT

The paper offers this basic proposition: The higher the social insulation of professional organizations, the higher the professional autonomy within them--and vice versa. Essentially the paper offers an interconnected set of propositions dealing with environmental pressures on the autonomy of college/university faculties coupled with a discussion of the coping strategies that faculties make when threatened. Some of the propositions are: 1) the greater the external control over resources, the lower the professional autonomy; 2) the lower the professionals' control over client characteristics, the lower the professional autonomy; and, 3) the more the school and its significant environment tend to be in harmony, the greater the professional autonomy of the faculty, and vice versa. The author proposes that much can be learned about the autonomy and organization of the academic profession by examining the relation of professionals to their environment, instead of focusing on the internal nature of the profession itself or on the academic institution. If this is correct, much of the variation in the internal operation and structure of colleges/universities ought to be predictable from a knowledge of their relations with their outside environment. (Author/JLB)

ED 062244

OE-BR 5-0252
SD

Ed002 933

Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STANFORD UNIVERSITY

STANFORD CENTER
FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
IN TEACHING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Research and Development Memorandum No. 78

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE, PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY, AND COPING STRATEGIES IN ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS

J. Victor Baldridge

School of Education
Stanford University
Stanford, California

September 1971

Published by the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, supported in part as a research and development center by funds from the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the Office of Education should be inferred. (Contract No. OEC-6-10-078, Project No. 5-0252-0306.)

Introductory Statement

The Center is concerned with the shortcomings of teaching in American schools: the ineffectiveness of many American teachers in promoting achievement of higher cognitive objectives, in engaging their students in the tasks of school learning, and, especially, in serving the needs of students from low-income areas. Of equal concern is the inadequacy of American schools as environments fostering the teachers' own motivations, skills, and professionalism.

The Center employs the resources of the behavioral sciences--theoretical and methodological--in seeking and applying knowledge basic to achievement of its objectives. Analysis of the Center's problem area has resulted in three programs: Heuristic Teaching, Teaching Students from Low-Income Areas, and the Environment for Teaching. Drawing primarily upon psychology and sociology, and also upon economics, political science, and anthropology, the Center has formulated integrated programs of research, development, demonstration, and dissemination in these three areas. In the Heuristic Teaching program, the strategy is to develop a model teacher training system integrating components that dependably enhance teaching skill. In the program on Teaching Students from Low-Income Areas, the strategy is to develop materials and procedures for engaging and motivating such students and their teachers. In the program on Environment for Teaching, the strategy is to develop patterns of school organization and teacher evaluation that will help teachers function more professionally, at higher levels of morale and commitment.

The following paper, which comes from the Environment for Teaching program, discusses the ways in which the autonomy of college and university faculties is undermined and the means by which it can be upheld.

Contents

Abstract iv

Introduction 1

Professional Autonomy: The Dependent Variable 3

Propositions Linking Professional Autonomy and Environmental Pressures 7

Conclusion 17

References 20

Abstract

The paper offers this basic proposition: "The higher the social insulation of professional organizations, the higher the professional autonomy within them--and vice versa." Essentially the paper offers an interconnected set of propositions dealing with environmental pressures on the autonomy of college and university faculties, coupled with a discussion of the responses that faculties make when they are threatened. Thus, the propositions link (a) environmental pressure, (b) professional autonomy, and (c) "coping" strategies (defenses against threats).

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE, PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY, AND COPING STRATEGIES IN ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS

J. Victor Baldridge
Stanford University

Introduction

In the past fifteen years organization theorists have begun to study the impact of the external environment on complex organizations (for example, see Dill 1958, Evan 1966, Lawrence & Lorsch 1967, Terreberry 1968, Thompson 1962, 1967, and Thompson & McEwen 1958.) For decades the prime focus has been on the internal operation of bureaucracies, but in the last few years more attention has been paid to the social context within which an organization functions. Nowhere is this concern more pronounced than among sociologists who study academic organizations, for in colleges and universities throughout the nation it is increasingly obvious that many of the life-and-death decisions affecting the organization are being made outside--in the Congress, in the cell meetings of New Left radicals, among right-wing pressure groups, in the Pentagon, and in the governor's office. Anyone who has watched academic decision making in the last decade can see that powerful external forces are impinging on the university from all sides, tearing at the fabric of the academic community, threatening to destroy much of the autonomy that academic institutions have built up so painfully over the years.

Colleges and universities provide an excellent setting for studying the effects of environmental pressure on an organization, not only because this is a timely topic, but because they are important "professional" organizations, a subject that has now grown to be a major subsection of organization theory in sociology. One of the chief demands made by professional workers--whether they are working in a hospital, a college, an industry, or a law firm--is for "professional autonomy," the right to make important decisions based solely on the good of the client and the expertise of the professional. Of course, there are always counter forces that undermine professional autonomy; one, which has been heavily studied, is the bureaucracy.

An earlier version of this publication appears in J. Victor Baldridge, ed., Academic Governance: Research on Institutional Politics and Decision Making. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp. © 1971. The present version is published by arrangement with McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

However, some of the most important types of counter forces that undermine professional autonomy come from outside the organization, as suggested by research on the public schools (Bidwell 1965; Carlson 1964), voluntary social service agencies (Rose 1955), and colleges (Baldridge 1971; Clark 1960). In the literature on professional organizations that is slowly growing, there is a constant theme: If the professional organization is well "insulated" from environmental pressure, then professional norms, task definitions, and work routines dominate the activities of the organization, and professionals are the chief wielders of power within it. Major universities, hospitals, and law firms usually exhibit this kind of professional domination. On the other hand, if the insulation between the organization and the environment is weak, then nonprofessional values will dominate, and the professionals may be reduced to the role of hired employees doing the bidding of bureaucratic managers. (For the same thesis examined in the context of traditional work organizations, see Udy 1959.) Public school teachers, social workers, and nurses often complain that this describes their situation. Thus, this theoretical proposition emerges from the literature: The greater the social insulation of professional organizations, the higher the professional autonomy within them. Conversely, the greater the environmental pressure, the lower the professional autonomy.

At first glance, this proposition seems sound, but it is not easy to test. If we establish a crude continuum of professional organizations that are vulnerable to environmental pressure, from social work and public schools at one end to universities and hospitals at the other, there is the obvious problem of determining what are the effects of environmental pressure and what can be accounted for by other variables, such as the level of staff training, the nature of financial support, the task itself, and numerous other factors. How can we control for these intervening factors in order to test the thesis of environmental pressure? One way may be to focus on a single type of organization and look for variation on environmental pressure within that category of organization. This approach would effectively control for most of the variables above, and still allow a clear test of the thesis. This paper reports on the theoretical propositions that elaborate the basic thesis of the effects of environmental pressure as it applies to colleges and universities. It offers a set of propositions about the two major elements of the thesis--professional autonomy and environmental pressure--and the strategies that can be used to defend the one against the other.

Professional autonomy is the power of the principal task-oriented professionals, in this case the faculty, to determine the major goals of the organization and to establish operating systems that support those goals. Lack of autonomy implies that other groups have that power, at least to a significantly greater degree than the faculty.

Environmental pressure is a global concept that covers a huge variety of impinging factors. Three types of pressure to which colleges and universities are most susceptible (and about which there is already a body of organizational research) have been chosen for analysis: financial dependency, client dependency, and counter values.

Coping strategies are designed to offer protection from environmental pressures. They may be ideological claims, such as the demand that professionals should have power because of their expertise. Or they may take the form of structural and organizational devices that protect the professional's influence, such as tenure, professional organizations, unions, control of governing boards, and other systems that are organizationally structured to increase professional power.

In the following sections a number of propositions are offered about the interlocking relationships between professional autonomy, environmental pressure, and coping strategies.

Professional Autonomy: The Dependent Variable

Professional autonomy is the right of professional staff members to set goals and to structure the organization so as to be able to achieve them. Since the concept of "goal setting" is ambiguous, professional autonomy must be translated into some more concrete operational factors; at least four seem critical.

Control Over Core Technology

Central task control is the process by which the professional staff exercises control over the basic organizational tasks, the "core technology" in J. D. Thompson's terminology (1967). Any fairly complex organization may be expected to have a central administrative structure that deals with support functions,i.e., obtaining money, coordinating diverse activities, and maintaining physical facilities. Professional autonomy is not so much the control of these support services as it is the control of functions central to the profession--setting the curriculum, defining the nature of the

student body, stipulating graduation requirements, specifying research goals. If the environment impinges on the college or university to the extent that these central professional functions are not handled by the faculty, but are instead defined by law or set by the administration, then the faculty has low professional autonomy.

Operationally, control over the professionals' central functions could be measured in at least two ways. First, if we used a list of "influence spheres" in a school with high professional autonomy, we would expect both faculty and administration to rate the faculty influence as very high on curriculum, research goals, admissions criteria, and subject matter. In short, there would be high central task control perceived by staff people. Second, we would expect professional autonomy to be reflected in structural arrangements. Alongside the administrative structures of the college or university there would be well-developed faculty decision-making mechanisms, including committees, academic councils, senates, and the like. Moreover, these groups would be rated as having a high degree of influence over the core technologies. Of course, the exact structural arrangements would vary considerably. For example, we would not expect an elaborate committee system and a strong faculty senate in a small college, as we might in a major university. Nevertheless, in an institution with high professional autonomy, there would be a faculty hierarchy with effective, respected mechanisms parallel to the administrative hierarchy. In some cases these may be almost entirely informal, but we would generally expect formal mechanisms to appear, even in rather non-complex colleges. In short, the faculty has to protect its influence and professional autonomy by strong, effective, structural decision mechanisms. A measure of professional control over the core technology would therefore be the existence of faculty decision mechanisms and a high rating of their effectiveness. Of course, the absence of professional autonomy would be matched by the absence of such mechanisms.

Evaluation by Peers

The argument of professionals that only their peers (i.e., other experts) should have the right to evaluate their work has been one of the persistent arguments in the literature on professionalism. The physician demands that only other physicians monitor his work; the lawyer looks only to other legal experts for evaluation; the professor feels that only another professor can make meaningful assessments of his teaching and scholarly research. Scott,

Dornbusch, Busching, and Liang (1967) have suggested that the effective, operational authority structure in any organization may be found in its evaluation systems. Thus authority is defined as the right to set tasks, determine the criteria for measuring effectiveness, and evaluate work performance. (For a study of this theory applied to university faculty, see Hind 1971.) The professional always demands that operational authority in this sense--task setting, criteria formulation, and evaluation--be lodged with the professional group, not with administrators, clients, or outside groups. Thus, faculties with professional autonomy can evaluate each other's performance, grant tenure, and make promotions. The intrusion of outside forces often undermines this right, and frequently "professionally irrelevant" criteria are imposed by interest blocs outside the university. The whole meaning of "academic freedom" is the protection of the faculty against these encroachments and the assurance of professionally defined criteria for evaluation. The right to determine who is hired, promoted, and granted tenure is at the very heart of the academic freedom and professional autonomy issues, for the faculties only have true, operational "authority" over their own activities--that is, they only have autonomy--when they can control evaluation practices. The surest sign of external interference and the deterioration of professional autonomy is a breakdown in the evaluation system and the imposition of external, nonprofessional criteria.

Work Standardization

One of the chief desires of a faculty member is simply to be left alone. With his expert knowledge and his internalized training he believes that the greatest gift of mankind is the splendid freedom of doing more or less as he pleases, without the interference of administrators, pressure groups, or even students. Of course, people both inside and outside the university are not so sure that this is a good idea: left to his own devices the professor might neglect his students, take many "consulting" trips, or perhaps even be a little lazy. Consequently, as groups other than the faculty gain power, they tend to impose work schedules, reporting devices, and standardized procedures to ensure that the faculty performs its work properly. Anyone who has moved from a relatively protected, insulated major private university to the vulnerable public college has met with standardized work procedures in the endless counting of pennies, the virtual time-clock schedule, the loss of freedom in course scheduling, the contracts that specify work activities in detail,

and the endless red tape with which state agencies bind faculty behavior. Thus, one of the best measures of professional autonomy is the freedom from standardization, the freedom to set one's own work schedule, and the freedom from bureaucratic tasks. This should be one of the easiest variables to measure, for a series of questions about financial accounting, control of time, and the detail of work specifications in faculty contracts would reveal great differences between colleges and universities with different environments.

Departmental Autonomy

Academics are not a unified professional group but are splintered into different disciplines and departments. In the university, departments not only are administrative subdivisions (as they are in most governmental or industrial organizations), but they are also a strong enclave of professional experts and a structural system that supports particular methodologies, theories, and views of the world. Indeed, one of the most critical features of the academic profession and the academic organization are their framentation into hostile little tribes, speaking different languages and worshiping different gods (for an excellent discussion of this, see Clark 1963). If the department is so critical to the academic professional both as a center of his discipline and as an administrative structure within his school, then it is no wonder that academics are extremely resentful of any outside control--"outside" being defined as other departments, administrators, and students, as well as groups outside the university.

One of the major ways of protecting professional autonomy is to have strong, independent departments; and one of the best ways to measure professional autonomy is to determine how much departmental freedom there is to set goals, hire faculty, arrange departmental academic standards, and control significant parts of the budget. This should be a fairly simple variable to measure, for department chairmen can readily respond to questions about the degree of autonomy that their departments have in some areas.

The departmental autonomy thesis may be complicated by the size of the college or university, for it may happen that as an organization grows larger, more and more decisions are turned over to departments simply because the central administration cannot handle all the details (see Boland 1971). As a result, the basic thesis that "the higher the environmental pressure, the lower the departmental autonomy" must be considered with size factors controlled.

In summary, professional autonomy is a complex of several factors, including the right to make "core technology" decisions, the availability of decision mechanisms to protect that right, the right to control the evaluation and reward system, the freedom from standardization of work behavior, and the protection of professional values in relatively autonomous departments. With these factors in mind, let us turn to the environmental pressure variable and see how its various components affect professional autonomy.

Propositions Linking Professional Autonomy and Environmental Pressures

"Environmental pressure," like "professional autonomy," is a broad umbrella. Three of the variables it covers will be considered here in order to show their effect on professional autonomy.[1]

Resource Pressures

All organizations must have adequate resources if they are to survive and carry out their tasks. Controlling the acquisition of resources, the setting of priorities, and the allocation of funds is of course a critical activity that determines to a high degree the destiny of an organization. In academic organizations it is rare that the faculties, as a group, make budgetary decisions. Nevertheless, they do exercise an enormous influence on the academic priorities of an institution, and indirectly on the administrators that make the critical resource allocation decisions. The degree to which administrators are responsive to the professional faculty's demands is heavily dependent on whether the university's primary resources are controlled by the university or by outside groups.

---

[1]The propositions about the effect of environmental pressure on professional autonomy are global; that is, the way in which each subtype of pressure affects each subtype of professional autonomy (control over core technology, mechanism for decisions, peer evaluation, departmental autonomy, and work standardization) has not been specified. It would be extremely tedious to go through all five subtypes of professional autonomy with each subtype of environmental pressure, and in almost every case all the effects would run in the same direction. For example, if the environmental pressure lowered professional control over the core technology, it would almost always lessen the effectiveness of internal faculty decision mechanisms, increase work standardization, diminish peer evaluation, etc. In effect, each of the professional autonomy subtypes is only an operational way of measuring the variable, not a factor to be considered individually.

Proposition 1: The greater the extent of external control over resources, the lower the professional autonomy.

The first proposition distinguishes schools with substantial internal resources, such as endowments, from schools that depend on outside funds, such as government support, gifts, or foundation grants. Obviously schools with huge endowments or other internally controlled resources should be expected to display much more professional autonomy than those that must continuously seek outside aid. However, the simple "external/internal" distinction tells little of the story, for it is not only the external nature, but the configuration of the resources that determines professional autonomy. At first glance it may seem that the more groups a college is dependent on, the less professional autonomy it has, for all those external groups will make their own unique demands about the goals and activities of the institution. On closer examination, however, this proves not to be the case, for many--perhaps most--of the more independent universities, run largely by their professional faculties, have extremely numerous sources of funds. A revision is suggested:

Proposition 2: The greater the <u>concentration</u> of external resources, the lower the professional autonomy.

It is the concentration of resources in a few hands, not the mere existence of many groups of contributors, that really gives external forces enormous power over the destiny of a college or university (see Evan 1966). The control of funds by the state legislature make state colleges dependent on the desires of the state; the control of funds by a religious body can make a school a vassal of the church; dependence on a local school board lays the community college open to powerful local interests.

It is important to see that some types of "concentration" are different from others. The most important case is when it appears that resources are concentrated in the hands of students (through tuition) or donors (through a large number of small individual gifts), because this type of concentration is very likely to show up in the annual financial report of an institution, especially a private one. At first it might seem that such an institution would be very dependent on these sources of income, but the report masks the fact that, although they are major fund sources, small gifts and individual tuition payments are actually the results of hundreds of individual decisions rather than a few--i.e., they are aggregate, accumulated resources, not direct concentrated resources. To illustrate the point, if a million dollars is

listed in one line of the income budget for student tuition, and another million is contributions from a thousand different donors, this is certainly not the same kind of concentration as if two million dollars comes from the Ford Foundation. Consequently, the following corollary to the second proposition is offered.

> Corollary 2a: The more "direct" and less "aggregated" a single type of source is, the more concentrated that source is; and hence the lower the professional autonomy.

The above three propositions about resource control are very helpful in explaining why the faculty has more professional autonomy in some types of schools than in others. Clearly control of resources is not the only factor, for a number of state schools have considerable professional autonomy despite their dependence on the state legislature; many religious schools have been able to develop strong professional faculties; many junior colleges have devised means of warding off external pressure. Nevertheless, the general rule seems to stand: all other things being equal, the more a school is dependent on the environment for resources, the less autonomy the professionals have. In general, then, we would expect a community college or a junior college with a local school board as its source of funds to have very low professional autonomy; a liberal arts college with strong financial ties to a church but some measure of independence because of its tuition base probably would have a medium level of professional autonomy; and a school with major endowments or constitutionally empowered taxing rights would display the most professional autonomy (for confirmation see Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958).

Coping Strategies. How does the academic profession attempt to protect itself from the interference that comes with financial dependence? A number of coping strategies are available.

> Coping Strategy 1: Professional organizations attempt to maintain resource autonomy by seeking alternative sources of income.

Just as some large industries attempt to decrease their dependency on a single market by diversifying their products, academic organizations work hard to diversify their sources of income (see Thompson 1967, p. 32). The current trend among private universities to secure state aid, as has been done in Pennsylvania, is clearly such an attempt. In addition, there is a continued effort to maintain aggregate resources. Some schools, such as Stanford, have learned that heavy dependence on federal research grants can seriously affect their financial stability when those funds fluctuate; consequently, they are

trying to develop other, less concentrated, resource bases. In addition, many state schools, such as the University of California at Berkeley, have recently undertaken major campaigns to raise more private funds in order to diversify their financial inputs.

Coping Strategy 2: Professional organizations attempt to maintain resource autonomy by stockpiling resources.

One way to ensure that current resource suppliers do not get a stranglehold on the organization is to "stockpile" (i.e., invest) resources (see Thompson 1967, p. 20). The endowment is the cushion that many schools fall back on when they need independence from environmental pressure. Thus, the endowment system is not only a financial device, but a significant contributor to professional autonomy, a buffer that protects the integrity of the school.

Coping Strategy 3: Professional organizations attempt to buffer the direct influence of financial dependency by pooling and sharing of limited resources.

The pooling of resources occurs in at least two different ways. Several colleges and universities may share computer facilities, libraries, and faculty. Or an institution may pool its own resources by distributing funds from resource-rich areas to areas that are poor. For example, every major university supports many of its humanities programs with money drawn from the overhead on scientific research projects. Internal shifting to eliminate some of the cruder impacts of the commercial market helps give vulnerable professional groups more autonomy.

Client Dependency

The second major type of environmental pressure is the dependency that comes from particular types of client relations. Clark's study (1960) of the "open-door" community college is an important analysis of a school that was highly dependent on its environment. A part of Clark's analysis concerns the formal external control that resulted from the close link between the college trustees and the community. Another deals with the dependency which came from the fact that admissions policies were set by the community, not by the college. In effect, the professional staff had no control over the "inputs" from the environment; consequently, Clark argues, the goals of the college were largely determined "in the marketplace," by student course selection, rather than by the faculty's professional judgment about the curriculum. Clark's discussion leads to another proposition about environmental influence:

Proposition 3: The lower the professionals' control over client characteristics, the lower the professional autonomy.

The inability of the professionals to determine what sort of "clients" they will have usually comes from one of two factors. First, some external group has the legal right to set admissions policies, as, for example, in Clark's community college, or there are no admissions restrictions at all, as at the City University of New York. The client control issue thus has a specifying corollary:

Corollary 3a: The greater the degree of legal power to set admissions policies vested in an external group, the lower the professional control of clients, and hence the lower the professional autonomy.

The second factor is the size of the recruiting base. Obviously schools that have a large recruiting base will be able to select carefully and to use a professionally imposed set of standards, whereas schools that have a small recruiting base must be satisfied with what they can get. Consequently:

Corollary 3b: The larger the recruiting pool relative to the needed student body, the more the professional staff can exercise discretion, and hence the greater the professional autonomy.

Coping Strategies. There are several coping strategies that may help the professionals maintain control over the client base.

Coping Strategy 4: Professional staffs try to formulate and project an appropriate "public image" to enlarge the client recruitment pool, and to define in advance the nature of the client group.

A public image serves a dual purpose. It not only helps attract a larger recruitment pool, simply by making the school more widely known, but it serves as a screening device that eliminates most of the "undesirable" applicants in advance. Most prestigious schools, for example, have very few unqualified applicants (even though they still may have to select out a smaller group because of limited space), and this is largely due to the image that the school projects. Colleges and universities often go to great expense to describe their unique role, and public relations staffs have become a part of many administrations. Baldridge (1971) shows how New York University deliberately changed its public image through intense propaganda. Faced with competition from other universities that were stealing its traditional clientele, NYU altered its recruitment strategy, concentrating more on students of high ability and

emphasizing "urban" education. NYU's experience is nothing unusual, for schools work constantly at the task of projecting favorable, selective public image; and by thus controlling the nature of the client base and the recruitment pool, they are coping, at least partially, with environmental pressure.

Coping Strategy 5: Professionals use their claim to expert knowledge to argue against the imposition of external standards of admission for students.

"We are the only ones who really know what standards make sense; other, nonprofessional standards are merely 'political' pressures"--so goes the fundamental argument of the faculty against outside groups who try to impose standards. This kind of argument does carry a great deal of weight, for the expert knowledge of the faculty is generally respected; nevertheless the open-door admissions policy is at present a strong movement that often overrides professional opposition.

Coping Strategy 6: Having failed at controlling admissions, the faculty will attempt to control the client base by exerting heavy pressure on students of low ability to "counsel-out" of school.

Even in the rare situations in which the faculty cannot control who comes in they certainly have a great deal of influence over who stays in. Clark reports on the heavy emphasis that was given counseling services in the open-door community colleges, where many of the students were academically unprepared and unsure about their vocations. Moreover, the faculty felt that it was their job to test the students severely in their first years. In this way, they tried to weed out many students who would never have been enrolled if the faculty had held control over admissions.

Counter Values

The third type of environmental pressure comes from outside groups who seek to impose their own values on the professional faculty. In its extreme form this kind of pressure tends to be dramatically and fundamentally hostile to professional values. The shrill attacks on university faculties during the McCarthy era of the 1950's are a clear example of this kind of pressure (see Lazarsfeld & Thielens 1958). Of course, in more subtle forms this pressure goes on all the time, in a trustee's "suggestion" that a controversial faculty member not be rehired, in the veiled threat by a donor that funds will be withheld if the faculty continues on a certain course, in a thousand and one small incidents that come up from day to day.

Proposition 4: The more the school and its significant environment tend to be in harmony, the greater the professional autonomy of the faculty; and the more they tend to be in conflict, the lower the professional autonomy.

It is important to specify the qualifications under which this type of pressure will be effective in decreasing professional autonomy. Obviously the mere existence of counter values in the environment is not enough to undermine professional autonomy, there must be methods for giving them political clout. Consequently, the following corollaries are offered to specify the conditions under which counter values may impinge on professional autonomy.

Corollary 4a: The greater the control over resources held by groups with counter values, the lower the professional autonomy.

Corollary 4b: The greater the control over client characteristics held by groups with counter values, the lower the professional autonomy.

Corollary 4c: The greater the control over the formal governing board held by groups with counter values, the lower the professional autonomy.

The first two corollaries are direct sequels to earlier discussions, and the third is so obvious as to need no further discussion.

The activities of right-wing political groups during the McCarthy era provide a vivid example of direct value pressure, but there are of course many other cases. One of the most persistent value conflicts, which permeates a vast segment of the academic system in the United States, is that between religious devotion and dispassionate inquiry. Faculties in church-dominated schools almost by definition face some degree of conflict between objective, scientific "truth" and religious, nonscientific "truth." If strong religious bodies control the selection of clients through church-based recruitment, control governing boards through church-selected boards of trustees, and control financial resources through church contributions, then there is very likely to be conflict between the demands of scholarship and of religious loyalty. Among the other sources of value conflicts that now affect the campus are the anti-science mood of many students, leftist radical movements that (correctly?) feel that the academic community has prostituted its knowledge in the service of "imperialistic" economic and political policies, and resurgent conservative movements opposed to "campus violence."

It is generally true that as hostile values are forced on a college or university, the professional autonomy of the faculty declines, especially if the hostile groups control the resources, the clientele, or the formal

trusteeship. However, the effect of value-oriented interest groups is more complex than this (there are parallels with the issue of financial control): If hostile interests are concentrated on one side of an issue--let us say all the major environmental pressures are politically conservative and are aligned against a liberal faculty--thus are likely to be more influential than if they are fragmented. Earlier we noted that it was not merely the number of financial power groups, but their configuration--whether a small group held most of the resources or whether the resources were spread out. Likewise, it is the configuration of value-oriented interest groups, not their absolute number, that determines the autonomy of the college or university.

The relationship between interest group configurations and professional autonomy is curvilinear. Other things being equal, a high concentration of interest groups on one side of an issue leads to low autonomy. Medium fragmentation of groups on many sides of an issue leads to freedom-giving "cross-pressures" in which the faculty can play off one group against another. Extreme fragmentation, however, leads to a kind of war of all against all, and the resultant hostilities and controversies are apt to become so disruptive that the faculty is left with very little autonomy.

Obviously the relationship between professional autonomy and value pressures arising from the environment is a very delicate one. In the best of all possible worlds, a faculty's values would be shared by its supporting environment, thus eliminating the pressure. However, barring that fortunate configuration of the stars, professional autonomy is most threatened by either of two extremes--either extreme concentration of interest groups as a power bloc, or extreme fragmentation into vicious, vigorously competing interest groups, virtually all of which oppose the faculty. Given any pressure at all, the most comfortable situation is to have a medium level of fragmentation so that various groups can be played off against each other and areas of freedom between the groups established. Of course, all this discussion is dependent on the prior argument that outside groups can only have major impact when they can translate their desire to exert pressure into effective control over resources, client characteristics, or formal trusteeship.

In light of this discussion we can now offer the last proposition about value pressures.

> Proposition 5: Other things being equal, high concentration of value-pressure groups on one side of an issue leads to low professional autonomy; medium fragmentation of value-pressure groups leads to conflicting pressures and higher professional autonomy; high fragmentation leads to intense conflict and lower professional autonomy.

Coping Strategies. Over the years academic professionals have experienced many different kinds of value pressures--political, religious, scientific, and ideological. In response, they have developed a rather elaborate set of defense mechanisms. One of the most valuable is the fostering of a tight professional "culture," in which the professionals support each other and fight against the imposition of alien values as a group, chiefly by setting up a framework of norms that can be used to stir the public conscience in defense of academic freedom. In The Academic Mind, Lazarsfeld and Thielens report that schools with highly developed academic cultures--strong feelings of professional identity, and high academic quality in the traditional sense--were the most resistent to interference from right-wing pressure blocs. The administrations in those schools took strong stands in order to protect their faculties, and they justified their action by appealing to professional standards and academic freedom. Thus,

> Coping Strategy 7: In the face of counter values, faculties develop a strong normative protective position, commonly known as "academic freedom," and use this value as a legitimation behind which they can hide.

But simply articulating a value is not enough, for without structural and organizational protections the value can be easily undermined. Consequently, the normative value must be supported by some tough organizational strategies, the most important of which is the tenure system. The tenure mechanism as an organizational protection of academic freedom has long been used, of course, and it is coupled with the right to a "trial by peers," which guarantees that only competent professional colleagues may say when a faculty member has overstepped the bounds of admissible behavior. Thus,

> Coping Strategy 8: Professional faculties use tenure and trial by peers as a protection against external interference.

Of course, tenure, academic freedom norms, and trial by peers are the result of power--they do not simply happen, but have been won in hard fights by generations of professional faculties. Thus, to talk of normative structures and procedural safeguards is really to talk of power that has been gradually wrested from both the external environment and trustees of institutions. Clark (1963), Mayhew (1970), and Reisman (1968) have all argued that one of the long-term developments in American higher education has been the gradual accumulation of professional power by faculties, to the point that in the present decade most major universities are dominated by their faculties in an

almost guild-like, or syndicalist fashion.[2] This control was gained by power plays, both inside institutions and outside, in professional organizations and unions. Consequently, the element of power must assuredly be brought into the equation as a protective mechanism.

A number of power strategies are used to protect the faculties. Perhaps the primary one has been the development of organizations within each discipline. These organizations insist that only they have the right to judge competency in their disciplines, and in many cases that are successful. They bring many types of sanctions to bear on schools that do allow outside groups to attempt to modify the faculty's behavior, including public censure, withdrawal of accreditation, and refusal to supply personnel.

Coping Strategy 9: Disciplinary professional organizations use power to counter value-pressure groups in the external environment.

The professional organizations for each discipline are paralleled by a number of organizations that claim to speak for the entire academic professional community, including the American Association of University Professors and various teachers unions. The AAUP in particular has always been deeply involved in protecting academic professionals from external interference, or as they more often put it, "upholding academic freedom." Although unions typically have been more concerned with bread and butter issues, they too have been aware of the need to counter outside pressures. All these groups are willing to use sanctions when schools are obviously violating principles of academic freedom.

---

[2]The guild-like control of the faculty--if that is an accurate description--raises an important value question: whether faculties should have strong professional autonomy. Throughout this paper the analysis has been rather one-sided; it should be obvious that in general I favor autonomy for faculties. However, there is a real question whether in some cases professional autonomy has not lead to unfortunate consequences. Students and outsiders alike are charging that faculties have become too autonomous, that students are neglected while autonomous faculty members play with esoteric research, that ivory-tower mentalities separate the professor from the "real" world, that research is petty, uninteresting and--worst of all--not useful. The experience of other professions, notably medicine, is that when the professional group becomes too autonomous it becomes self-serving, insensititve to social needs, and intolerant of legitimate claims upon it by the larger society. Under these circumstances the value issue must be sharply focused, and nothing in this paper should be construed as saying that professional autonomy is always a good thing.

Coping Strategy 10: National agencies for the entire academic profession work to elaborate and protect academic freedom, thus helping insolate faculties from external value-pressures.

While the disciplinary and national professional organizations have been working outside the college or university, the faculties have been developing internal protections. Primarily they take the form of faculty senates and strong decision-making bodies that will endeavor to ensure faculty dominance in the core areas of student selection, research policies, and academic requirements. Moreover, the faculties constantly seek to control the appointment of key administrators, i.e., presidents, deans, provosts. Forming a strong protective "boundary" composed of officials whom the faculty largely control is of course a function that trustees are reluctant to hand over to faculties; nevertheless, it is always a goal of faculties who need protection.

Coping Strategy 11: Internally, faculties try to gain power over the university's "boundary roles" in order to have a protective buffer between themselves and external pressures.

In summary, conflicts over values are among the most critical issues for a group whose professional life concerns the world of ideas, values, and norms, with the transmission and transformation of cultural ideas and ideals. A number of coping strategies have been and continue to be developed to deal with them.

Conclusion

The basic purpose of this paper has been to specify the types of professional autonomy and of environmental pressures, to show the impact of environmental pressure on autonomy, and to outline some of the coping strategies that can be used to counter the pressures. The principal thesis of the paper is that much can be learned about the autonomy and organization of the academic profession by examining the relation of professionals to their environment, rather than by focusing on the internal nature of the profession itself or on the academic institution.

If this proposition is correct, much of the variation in the internal operation and structure of colleges and universities ought to be predictable from a knowledge of their relations with their outside environment. At one end of a continuum we would find colleges and universities with very high environmental pressure and consequently low professional autonomy. The local

community colleges are clearly at this extreme of the continuum, for they are financially dependent on a local school district, have their student clientele entirely defined by law, and are faced with extreme pressures toward vocational training and service to the local community instead of the more traditional academic values of scholarly excellence. The faculty's work is highly standardized, with formal contracts that usually specify not only the exact number of teaching hours but even the precise courses to be taught. Office hours are specified and checked; absences require permission from department chairmen; there is very little freedom to handle financial matters and virtually no control over major decisions, and there are few effective decision mechanisms that allow for faculty input. The decision-making process is centralized in the administration, and departmental autonomy over hiring, promotion, and tenure is very limited. Peer evaluation is not as much a part of the promotion and tenure scheme, as in other types of schools; in fact, promotions are usually based on standard time schedules rather than on quality of performance, much as in the public school system. Certainly it would be wrong to attribute all of these infringements of the faculty's autonomy to environmental pressure, for other factors such as the nature of the faculty itself and the overall goals of the college are obviously involved. Nevertheless, the "captive" nature of the community college vis-à-vis its environment is a critical issue in the faculty's lack of autonomy.

At the other end of the continuum is the large private university that is heavily endowed and well insulated against outside influences. Depending on its tuition, endowments, and individual research grants for financial support, this kind of university has a great measure of freedom from its surrounding environment. The client pool is usually large, and control over it is in the hands of the professionals, who determine admissions criteria. In addition, even though a major university is most likely to have value-pressures placed on it because of its liberal professors, it has the strongest commitment to academic freedom, the most articulate support from professional guardians outside the particular institution, and the most protective administrators taking the boundary roles.

At this end of the continuum--in the Yales, Harvards, and Stanfords--the faculty has an amazing amount of autonomy. There is almost no standardization of work: the teaching hours, course loads, office hours, contractual relations, and other symbols of standardization are deliciously ambiguous, allowing the professor the greatest measure of that supreme right--the right to be left

alone. Decision making is decentralized; the faculty can express its desires and opinions through committees, faculty senates, and autonomous departments. Hiring, promotion, and evaluation of faculty are reserved to the faculty itself, and any intrusion into their realm is strongly, and usually successfully, resisted. These defenses against environmental influence allows enormous freedom for the faculty in such universities.

Of course, there are countless variations between the community college at one extreme, and the major private university at the other, and of course the environmental pressure variable cannot account for all of them; but it does have considerable power to explain the various degrees and kinds of professional autonomy that are found in colleges and universities.

References

Baldridge, J. Victor. Power and Conflict in the University. New York: Wiley, 1971.

Bidwell, Charles E. "The School as a Formal Organization," in James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965. Pp. 972-1022.

Boland, Walter. "Size, Organization, and Environmental Mediation," in J. Victor Baldridge, ed., Academic Governance. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1971. Ch. 3.

Carlson, R.O. "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and its Clients," in Behavioral Science and Educational Administration, 1964. Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1964. Part II, pp. 262-76.

Clark, B. R. Adult Education in Transition. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1956.

Clark, B. R. The Open Door College. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960.

Clark, B. R. "Faculty Organization and Authority," in Terry Lunsford, ed., The Study of Academic Administration. Boulder, Colo.: Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 1963.

Clark, B. R. "Interorganizational Patterns in Education," Administrative Science Quarterly, 10 (1965), 224-37.

Dill, W. R. "Environment as an Influence on Managerial Autonomy," Administrative Science Quarterly, 2 (1958),409-43.

Evan, W. M. "The Organizational Set: Toward a Theory of Interorganizational Relations," in J. D. Thompson, ed., Approaches to Organizational Design. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1966. Pp. 173-91.

Hind, Robert R. "Analysis of a Faculty: Professionalism, Evaluation, and the Authority Structure " in J. Victor Baldridge, ed., Academic Governance. Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1971. Ch. 13.

Lawrence, P. R., and Lorsch, J. W. "Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1967), 1-47.

Lawrence, P. R., and Lorsch, J. W. Organization and Environment. Boston, Mass.: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1968.

Lazarsfeld, Paul, and Thielens, Wagner. The Academic Mind. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958. Ch. 8.

Levine, S., and White, P. E. "Exchange as a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Interorganizational Relationships," Administrative Science Quarterly, 5 (1961), 583-601.

Litwak, E., and Hylton, Lydia F. "Interorganizational Analysis: A Hypothesis on Coordinating Agencies," Administrative Science Quarterly, 6 (1962), 395-420.

Maniha, J., and Perrow, C. "The Reluctant Organization and the Aggressive Environment," Administrative Science Quarterly, 10 (1965), 238-57.

March, J. G., and Simon, H. Organizations. New York: Wiley, 1958. Ch. 5, 7.

Mayhew, Lewis B. Arrogance on Campus. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970.

Messinger, S. L. "Organizational Transformation: A Case Study of a Declining Social Movement," Administrative Science Quarterly, 20 (1955), 3-10.

Reisman, David, and Jenks, Christopher. The Academic Revolution. New York: Doubleday, 1968.

Rose, A. "Voluntary Associations under Conditions of Competition and Conflict," Social Forces, 34 (1955) 159-63.

Schelling, T. Strategy of Conflict. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Scott, W. Richard, Dornbusch, Sanford M., Busching, Bruce C., and Laing, James D. "Organizational Evaluation and Authority," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1967), 93-117.

Simpson, R., and Gulley, W. H. "Goals, Environment, Pressure, and Organizational Change," American Sociological Review, 27 (1966), 344-51.

Stinchcombe, A. L. "Social Structure and Organizations," in James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965. Pp. 142-93.

Terreberry, Shirley. "The Evolution of Organizational Environments," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1968), 590-613.

Thompson, James D. Organizations in Action. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Thompson, James D. "Organizations and Output Transactions," American Journal of Sociology, 68 (1962), 309-24.

Thompson, James D., and McEwen, W. J. "Organizational Goals and Environment: Goal-Setting as an Interaction Process," American Sociological Review, 23 (1958), 23-31.

Udy, Stanley, Jr. Organization of Work. New Haven, Conn.: HRAF Press, 1959.

Warren, R. L. "The Interorganizational Field as a Focus for Investigation," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1967), 396-419.